

and nearest to happiness in regular pursuits and quiet domestic life.

One cannot help reflecting here, how amazingly accommodating this human nature has been to all institutions but wise and good ones : insomuch that an order of life and manners conceived in the wildest deviation from all plain sense and native instinct, could be practically adopted by some of those who had rank and courage enough, and adored and envied by the rest of mankind. Still, the genuine tendencies of nature have survived the strange but transient sophistications of time, and remain the same after the age of chivalry is gone far toward that oblivion, to which you will not fail to wish that many other institutions might speedily follow it. Forgive the prolixity of these illustrations intended to show, that schemes and speculations respecting the interests either of an individual or of society, which are inconsistent with the natural constitution of man, may, except where it should be reasonable to expect some supernatural intervention, be denominated romantic.

The tendency to this species of romance, may be caused, or very greatly promoted, by an exclusive taste for what is *grand*, a disease with which some few minds are affected. They have no pleasure in contemplating the system of things as the Creator has ordered it, a combination of great and little, in which the great is much more dependent on the little, than the little on the great. They cut out the grand objects, to dispose them into a world of their own. All the images in their intellectual scene must be colossal and mountainous. They are constantly seeking what is animated into heroics, what is expanded into immensity, what is elevated above the stars. But for great empires, great battles, great enterprises, great convulsions, great geniuses, great temples, great rivers, there would be nothing worth naming in this part of the creation.* All that belongs to connection, gradation, harmony, regularity, and utility, is thrown out of sight behind these forms of vastness. The influence of this exclusive taste will reach into the system of projects and

^ * Just as, to employ a humble comparison, a votary of fashion, after visiting a crowded public place which happened at that time not to be graced by the presence of many people of consequence, tells you, with an affected tone, "There was not a creature